

# Construction of New Maritime Center at Coast Guard Academy Nearly Complete



U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, one of two senators for Connecticut, speaks at the commissioning ceremony of the Maritime Center of Excellence, Oct. 12. The 20,000 square-foot Maritime Center of Excellence (MCOE) will be the Academy's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building and will highlight the unique waterfront programs there. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Abban*

NEW LONDON, Conn. – A \$25 million construction project is nearing completion at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy that will transform the waterfront area of the 90-year-old campus, the Academy said in an Oct. 12 release.

A ceremony and reception acknowledging the milestone was held at the center Oct. 12 with construction company

representatives, cadets and alumni eager to tour the nearly completed project.

The 20,000 square-foot Maritime Center of Excellence (MCOE) will be the Academy's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building and will highlight the unique waterfront programs there.

With a curvilinear vaulted roof, wooden decks and true north orientation, the building is designed to highlight the waterfront landscape. The new facility will feature interactive and high-tech classrooms designed to encourage collaboration.

The modern design of the center also includes ambitious sustainability design goals in line with coordinated climate resiliency efforts across the service to address the dangers posed by climate change.

The interior spaces of the future center have been designed with access to daylight and natural ventilation to minimize reliance on artificial lighting and air conditioning. Double-height spaces for vessel maintenance, office space and an atrium will provide natural ventilation.

Other sustainability goals include the exploration of ground-source heating and cooling, solar panels and rainwater harvesting. The building exterior will also feature durable, resilient materials that are easily maintained.

The completion of the center represents a significant step forward as the Academy works to recapitalize 1930's infrastructure and build modern training and education spaces to develop the future Coast Guard workforce.

"This LEED-certified, multi-purpose facility will be a space where young women and men can gather to learn and grow," said Rear Adm. Bill Kelly, academy superintendent. "I am certain it will enhance an appreciation for the water and all its power

and beauty, and ultimately play an important role in helping us instill a liking for the sea and its lore.”

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## Coast Guard Cutter Northland Diverted to Patrol Near Port-au-Prince, Haiti



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC 904) patrols with the Haitian Coast Guard in vicinity of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Oct. 12, 2022. The U.S. Coast Guard is one part of a whole-of-government approach to assist the Haitian government with security and stability throughout Haiti through the deterrence and prevention of dangerous, irregular maritime migration. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Seaman Rachelle Amezcua-Gonzales*  
MIAMI – The Coast Guard diverted one of its major cutters to

patrol near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Wednesday, at the request of the government of Haiti and in close coordination with the U.S. Department of State, the Coast Guard 7<sup>th</sup> District said in an Oct. 12 release.

USCGC Northland (WMEC 904) was diverted to Haiti as a clear sign of U.S. resolve in support of the Government of Haiti and its people, and to rendezvous with the Haitian Coast Guard for training in the area.

Northland was previously patrolling within the Windward Pass under the direction of the Coast Guard's Seventh District, headquartered in Miami, in support of Operation Vigilant Sentry, a standing maritime law enforcement operation.

"The U.S. Government has a vested interest in regional security throughout the Caribbean Sea and is aware of the ongoing situation of civil unrest and gang violence within Haiti," said Rear Adm. Brendan C. McPherson, commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District. "The Coast Guard is one part of a whole-of-government approach to assist the Haitian government with security and stability throughout Haiti, especially as it relates to the deterrence and prevention of dangerous, irregular maritime migration."

The Coast Guard has a longstanding relationship with the Haitian Coast Guard. In January 2010, USCGC Forward (WMEC 911), a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter, was the first U.S. asset to respond and render humanitarian aid and assistance following a 7.0-magnitude earthquake in Haiti. In August 2021, the Coast Guard was among the first U.S. agencies to respond with humanitarian aid following a 7.2-magnitude earthquake in Haiti.

In August 2022, USCGC Robert Yered (WPC 1104), a 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter, delivered firefighting equipment sourced as a donation from Miami-Dade Fire Rescue to better equip the Haitian firefighting department at Port-au-

Prince-Toussaint Louverture International Airport. In September 2022, the Coast Guard's international training team visited Haiti to facilitate the second of two iterations of small boat operations training with the Haitian Coast Guard to ensure uniform and repeatable training standards for the maintenance and safe operation of the Haitian Coast Guard's surface fleet.

The Coast Guard continues to patrol the Caribbean Sea to deter undocumented migration by sea. In fiscal year 2022, the Coast Guard interdicted 7,173 Haitian migrants attempting to enter the United States illegally by sea.

Northland is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. Northland's missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, drug interdiction, fisheries enforcement, migrant interdiction, homeland security and defense operations, international training, and humanitarian operations. Northland patrols the offshore waters from Maine to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard, U.K. Ships Seize \$93 Million in Drugs in Middle East**



Personnel from U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) inventory illicit drugs seized from a fishing vessel in international waters in the Gulf of Oman, Oct. 10. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter seized an estimated \$48 million worth of drugs from a fishing vessel while patrolling the Gulf of Oman, Oct. 10, while a week earlier a Royal Navy frigate seized \$45 million worth of drugs in the Gulf of Oman, said U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said in Oct. 9 and 11 releases.

While operating in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) seized 5,000 kilograms of hashish and 800 kilograms of methamphetamine as the fishing vessel transited international waters.

Glen Harris previously interdicted another fishing vessel Aug. 30 while patrolling the Gulf of Oman. The interdiction led to CTF 150 seizing 2,980 kilograms of hashish and 320 kilograms

of amphetamine tablets worth \$20 million. This followed two earlier Glen Harris seizures of heroin, methamphetamine and amphetamine pills worth \$28 million in the same body of water in May.

The fast response cutter arrived in the Middle East in January and operates from the U.S. Navy base in Bahrain where CMF is headquartered with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet.

The Royal Navy frigate HMS Montrose (F 236) was operating in international waters in the Gulf of Oman as part of CTF 150 when it seized 870 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine. Montrose is a Duke-class frigate that has been operating in the Middle East since March 2019.

“HMS Montrose again proves the value of having a forward-deployed presence in the region,” said Cmdr. Claire Thompson, the ship’s commanding officer. “This shows the professionalism of the boarding team and whole ship’s company.”

Led by the Royal Saudi Navy, CTF 150 is one of four task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the largest multinational naval partnership in the world. CTF 150 conducts maritime security operations in the Gulf of Oman and North Arabian Sea to help ensure the free flow of commerce.

Combined Maritime Forces is the largest multinational naval partnership in the world. The organization includes 34 nations and is headquartered in Bahrain with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet.

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# Coast Guard Releases Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Seattle Base Expansion

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard is inviting the public to comment on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Coast Guard’s proposed expansion and modernization of Base Seattle, the Coast 13th District said in a release. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the PEIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action alternatives.

The purpose of the expansion is to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure at Base Seattle to support current and future execution of the Coast Guard’s statutory missions. Base Seattle is the largest Coast Guard facility in the Pacific Northwest and is an essential facility to support Coast Guard missions in both the local area as well as the Polar Regions now and for the foreseeable future.

The draft PEIS can be read in its entirety at the following online location: <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/NEPA>

With the Oct. 11 publication of the Coast Guard’s Notice of Availability, the public may provide comments through Dec. 2, 2022. Comments may be submitted online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) with docket number USCG-2021-0183 or via U.S. Mail addressed to: U.S. Coast Guard, Shore Infrastructure Logistics Center, Environmental Management Division, ATTN: Mr. Dean Amundson, 1301 Clay Street, Suite 700N, Oakland, CA 94612-5203. Comments must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 2, 2022.

A public meeting is scheduled to be held in mid-November in

Seattle to provide an additional opportunity for public commentary. Additional details will be released at a later date.

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## Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast Returns Home after 55-Day Counter-Drug Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) is moored while the cutter made a port call to Huatulco Mexico, Aug. 29, 2022. Steadfast returned to their Astoria homeport Oct. 3, 2022, following a 55-day counter narcotics patrol. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ASTORIA, Ore. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) returned to their Astoria homeport Monday following a 55-day counter-narcotics patrol, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 9 release.

The crew aboard the 210-foot medium-endurance cutter steamed

more than 11,000 miles conducting training, law enforcement, search and rescue, and helicopter operations in international waters ranging from Oregon to Central America.

The Steadfast deployed with additional crew members from Maintenance Augmentation Team Seattle, Electronic Support Detachment Petaluma, and the soon-to-be-commissioned U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Argus (WMSM 915).

While en route to the cutter's patrol area in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Steadfast's crew hosted a helicopter operations proficiency event for multiple aircrews from Coast Guard Air Stations San Francisco, Barbers Point, Humboldt Bay, and North Bend. For three days, the crews conducted numerous flight operations including over 100 landings and various other operations. The resulting aviator qualifications across the four aviation units included one initial pilot qualification, and one upgrade to instructor pilot.

While in theater, Steadfast's crew identified and located a high-speed, panga-style vessel suspected of smuggling contraband. After initially pursuing the vessel with the cutter's over-the-horizon small boat, they handed off the case to a partner nation for intercept as the vessel neared partner nation territorial seas.

During the transit back to Astoria, Steadfast's crew conducted flight operations with Air Station Humboldt Bay. Steadfast and the aircrew completed six night landings for pilot training and qualification. Flight operations were cut short when the aircrew was diverted for a search-and-rescue case involving a hiker stranded and in distress. Steadfast's crew quickly adapted, refueled the helicopter on deck, and allowed the MH-65 to respond within minutes of receiving the call, demonstrating the versatility and adaptability of the cutter and crew to respond to any of the Coast Guard's missions.

This was the first patrol aboard Steadfast for the new commanding officer, Cmdr. Brock S. Eckel, who assumed command in July.

“This was a wildly productive deployment with noteworthy enhancements to crew qualifications and proficiency following a significant personnel turnover,” said Eckel. “I am overwhelmed by the camaraderie of the Steadfast crew and honored to join them for adventure on the high seas.”

Steadfast is a 54-year-old Reliance-class cutter that has been homeported in Astoria since 1994. Previously, Steadfast was homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she earned the nickname “El Tiburon Blanco” (‘the White Shark’), from drug smugglers for her notoriety in counter-narcotics operations in the Florida Straits and the Caribbean Sea.

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## **Coast Guard Interdicts 87 Lanchas off Texas Coast in Fiscal 2022**



Coast Guardsmen from Station South Padre Island, Texas, catch and detain Mexican nationals aboard a lancha after crews in Coast Guard aircraft spotted them fishing illegally in U.S. territorial waters Friday, May 1, 2015. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 1st Class Andrew Kendrick*

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Coast Guard law enforcement crews interdicted 87 lanchas, seized 15,809 pounds of catch and detained 373 fishermen off the Texas coast during fiscal year 2022, the Coast Guard 8<sup>th</sup> District said in a release.

Since the first recorded lancha interdiction in the late 1980s, the Coast Guard has seen a significant uptick in the detection of the vessels, recording an 11.5 percent increase in interdicted lanchas from fiscal year 2021.

[A noteworthy case](#) from this year occurred on Aug. 30, when Coast Guard crews interdicted three lanchas with a total of 14 Mexican fishermen, 2,425 pounds of red snapper and 440 pounds of shark aboard.

To counter [illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing](#), the

Coast Guard utilizes a layered approach for operations through aircraft, small boats and cutters.

Up to 27 million tons of fish are caught illegally each year throughout the world. IUU fishing accounts for 20 to 30 percent of global annual catch. Global losses from IUU fishing are estimated to be as much as \$23.5 billion per year.

“We view the lancha issue as an immediate threat to our living marine resources, border security, and U.S. sovereignty,” said Lt. Cmdr. Brendan Dunn, assistant chief of enforcement, Coast Guard District Eight. “In recent years, the illegal trade of red snapper, grouper, shark and other reef fish species has become extremely lucrative for the transnational criminal organizations operating in Mexico. With the continual increase of at-sea lancha interdictions, we would like to recognize the tremendous efforts of our field units at Coast Guard Sector and Air Station Corpus Christi, Station South Padre Island, our fast response cutters and patrol boats. We also thank our regional, state and federal partners for their tenacious commitment, professionalism, and teamwork to support this mission.”

A lancha is a fishing boat used by Mexican fishermen that is approximately 20-30 feet long with a slender profile. They typically have one outboard motor and are capable of traveling at speeds exceeding 30 mph. Lanchas pose a major threat, usually entering the United States Exclusive Economic Zone near the U.S.-Mexico border in the Gulf of Mexico with the intent to smuggle people, drugs or poach the United States' natural resources.

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# Coast Guard Offloads \$6.5 million in Seized Cocaine, Transfers 4 Smugglers



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and Caribbean Corridor Strike Force agents offloaded 721 pounds (327kgs) of cocaine Oct. 5, 2022 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, following the interdiction of a smuggling vessel in the Mona Passage Sept. 26, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ricardo Castrodad* SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and Caribbean Corridor Strike Force agents offloaded 721pounds (327kgs) of cocaine Oct. 5 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, following the interdiction of a smuggling vessel in the Mona Passage, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The four men apprehended in this case claimed to be Dominican

Republic nationals who are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance Aboard a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States. This charge carries carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. An additional charge includes Assaulting Federal Officers with a Deadly Weapon, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment.

The Transnational Organized Crime Assistant U.S. Attorney Jorge Matos from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case, while Special Agents supporting the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force are leading the investigation.

During the late-night hours of Sept. 26, 2022, the aircrew of a Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine multi-role enforcement aircraft detected a suspect go-fast vessel in waters northwest of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico. With Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser in pursuit, the smugglers jettisoned multiple bales of suspected contraband into the water. The Winslow Griesser crew stopped the suspect vessel, apprehended the four men and recovered 12 bales of the jettisoned contraband, which later tested positive for cocaine.

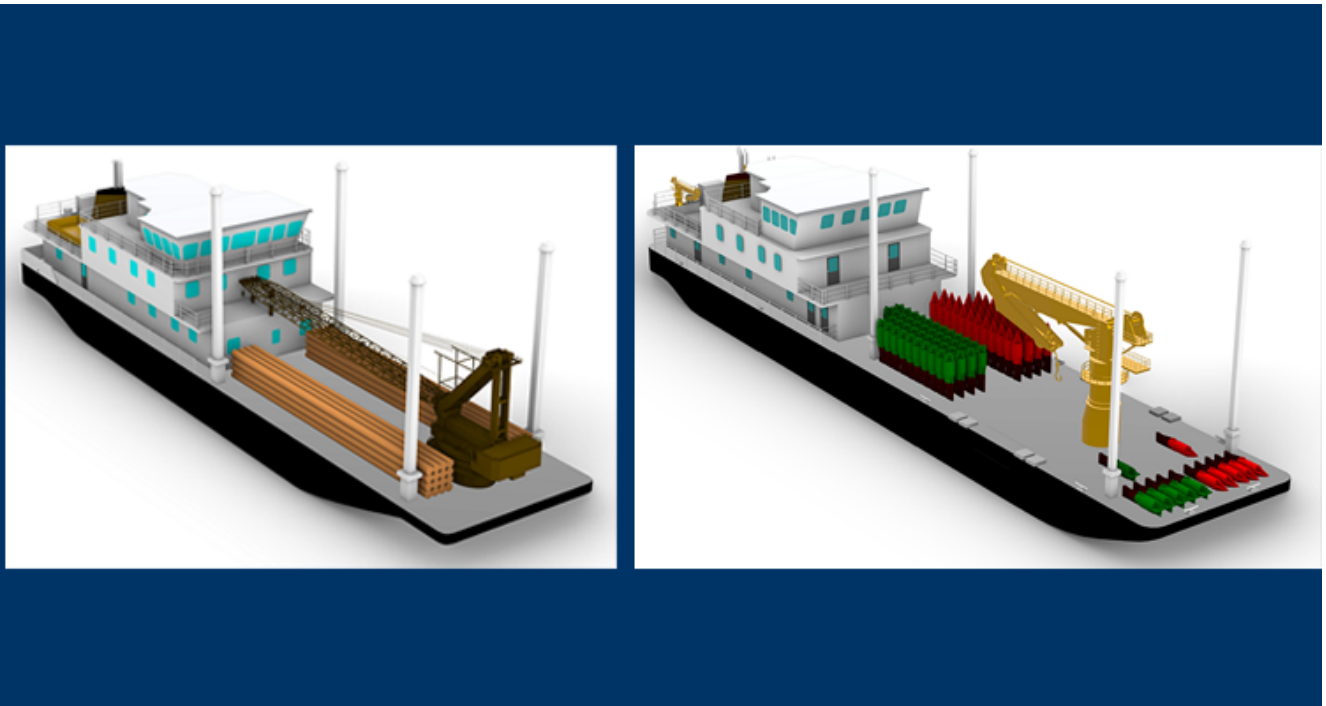
"I cannot be prouder of the Winslow Griesser crew, especially our small boat crew, whose skill and professionalism were instrumental in stopping this drug smuggling go-fast vessel," said Lt. Cmdr. Mark Tatara, cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. "We appreciate our Customs and Border Protection and our Coast Guard watchstanders who worked seamlessly to ensure a successful outcome in this case that helped keep these drugs from reaching the shores of Puerto Rico and bring those responsible to justice."

Cutter Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast response cutter

that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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# Coast Guard Awards Birdon America Inc. to Design, Build River Buoy, Inland Construction Tenders



Artist's rendering of the Inland Construction Tender (left) and River Buoy Tender. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

WASHINGTON – On Oct. 5, 2022, the Coast Guard Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) Program awarded Birdon America, Inc. of Denver, Colorado, an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity firm fixed price contract with economic price adjustments for the detail design and construction of its river buoy and inland construction tenders.

The initial award is worth \$28.49 million. The contract

includes options for the construction of a total of 16 river buoy tenders and 11 inland construction tenders.

If all contract line items are exercised, the total contract value is estimated at \$1.19 billion.

River buoy tenders service short-range aids to navigation (ATON) on the western rivers. They set, relocate and recover buoys to mark the navigable channel in the rivers as the water level changes and also establish and maintain fixed aids, lights and day beacons.

Inland construction tenders construct, repair and maintain fixed ATON within inland waterways along the Eastern Seaboard and Gulf of Mexico. They are the only Coast Guard platform with the capability to drive and remove piles, erect towers and effect major structural changes.

The Coast Guard has a statutory mission to develop, establish and maintain maritime ATON. WCCs will perform a critical part of this mission on the inland waterways and western rivers. The WCCs will replace the legacy inland tender fleet, which has an average vessel age of over 57 years and includes ships still in service at 78 years old. This contract award ensures the Coast Guard will continue to meet its vital missions throughout the Marine Transportation System.

“This contract award is an important milestone for the new inland fleet that will improve our operational capability on the Western Rivers, and Inland Waterways” said Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant, U.S. Coast Guard.

The new WCCs will have greater endurance, speed and deck load capacity than their predecessors. The ships will also feature improved habitability and will accommodate mixed-gender crews.

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# Stage 2 of the Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Cutter Moves Forward



Artist's rendition of a Stage 1 Offshore Patrol Cutter.  
*LEONARDO DRS*

WASHINGTON – The Coast Guard today issued a notice to Austal USA, the offshore patrol cutter (OPC) Stage 2 contractor, to proceed on detail design work to support future production of OPCs, Coast Guard Headquarters said in a release. The Coast Guard issued the notice following the withdrawal of an award protest filed in July with the Government Accountability Office by an unsuccessful Stage 2 offeror.

The Coast Guard on June 30, 2022, awarded a fixed-price incentive (firm target) contract through a full and open competition to Austal USA to produce up to 11 offshore patrol cutters. The initial award is valued at \$208.26 million and

supports detail design and long lead-time material for the fifth OPC, with options for production of up to 11 OPCs in total. The contract has a potential value of up to \$3.33 billion if all options are exercised.

The Coast Guard's requirements for OPC Stage 2 detail design and production were developed to maintain commonality with earlier OPCs in critical areas such as the hull and propulsion systems, but provide flexibility to propose and implement new design elements that benefit lifecycle cost, production and operational efficiency and performance.

The 25-ship OPC program of record complements the capabilities of the service's national security cutters, fast response cutters and polar security cutters as an essential element of the Department of Homeland Security's layered maritime security strategy. The OPC will meet the service's long-term need for cutters capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups and is essential to stopping smugglers at sea, interdicting undocumented non-citizens, rescuing mariners, enforcing fisheries laws, responding to disasters and protecting ports.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy Reaches the North Pole**



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) cuts a channel through the multi-year pack ice and snow as Healy transits the Arctic Ocean to the North Pole, Sept. 27, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Deborah Heldt Cordone, Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1*

NORTH POLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) reached the North Pole Friday after traversing the frozen Arctic Ocean, marking only the second time a U.S. ship has reached the location unaccompanied, the first being Healy in 2015, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 4 release.

Healy, a medium icebreaker, and crew departed Dutch Harbor, Alaska, Sept. 4, beginning its journey to reach latitude 90 degrees north. The cutter and crew supported oceanographic research in collaboration with National Science Foundation-funded scientists throughout their transit to the North Pole.

This is the third time Healy's traveled to the North Pole since its commissioning in 1999.

"The crew of Healy is proud to reach the North Pole," said Capt. Kenneth Boda, commanding officer of the Healy. "This rare opportunity is a highlight of our Coast Guard careers. We

are honored to demonstrate Arctic operational capability and facilitate the study of this strategically important and rapidly changing region.”

Healy is currently on a months-long, multi-mission deployment to conduct oceanographic research at the furthest reaches of the northern latitudes. The 420-foot icebreaker is the largest ship in the Coast Guard and is capable of breaking through four-and-half feet of ice at a continuous speed of three knots.

Healy, which departed its Seattle homeport on July 11, currently has thirty-four scientists and technicians from multiple universities and institutions aboard, and nearly 100 active duty crew members.

During the cutter’s first Arctic leg of the patrol throughout July and August, Healy traveled into the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, going as far north as 78 degrees. As a part of the Office of Naval Research’s Arctic Mobile Observing System program, Healy deployed underwater sensors, sea gliders and acoustic buoys to study Arctic hydrodynamics in the marginal and pack ice zones.

In addition to enabling Arctic science, Healy also supported U.S. national security objectives for the Arctic region by projecting a persistent ice-capable U.S. presence in U.S. Arctic waters, and patrolling our maritime border with Russia.

On its second Arctic mission of the summer, while transiting to the North Pole, Healy embarked a team of researchers as a part of the Synoptic Arctic Survey (SAS). SAS is an international collaborative research program focused on using specially equipped research vessels from around the world to gather data throughout the Arctic across multiple scientific disciplines. Dr. Carin Ashjian, from the Woods Hole

Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, is currently serving alongside Dr. Jackie Grebmeier as co-chief Scientists onboard Healy with support from the National Science Foundation.